

REMARKS

Claims 1-24 are pending in this application. Claims 1, 8, and 15-18 are independent claims. Claims 2-7, 9-14, and 19-24 are dependent claims. Claims 18-24 have been withdrawn from consideration.

Claims 1-17 have been rejected. Amendments to claims 1, 6-8, and 13-17 are presented herein. No new matter is being presented, and approval and entry are respectfully requested.

Request For Withdrawal Of Finality Of Office Action

The Examiner has made the current Office Action final. A final Office Action is properly issued when a new reference is cited when significant changes are made to the claims in a previous Office Action. The changes we made to the claims in the previous Office Action do not appear to be significant. For example, in claim 1, we added that the processing systems are external to the business support system. However, claim 1 had already specified "external processing systems." Accordingly, Applicants request withdrawal of the finality of the Office Action.

Entry of Amendment Under 37 C.F.R. §1.116

Applicants request entry of this Rule 116 Response because it is believed that the amendment of claims 1, 6-8, and 13-17 puts this application into condition for allowance. The amendments were not earlier presented because the Applicants believed in good faith that the cited prior art did not disclose the present invention as previously claimed.

The Manual of Patent Examining Procedures sets forth in Section 714.12 that "any amendment that would place the case either in condition for allowance or in better form for appeal may be entered." Moreover, Section 714.13 sets forth that "the Proposed Amendment should be given sufficient consideration to determine whether the claims are in condition for allowance and/or whether the issues on appeal are simplified." The Manual of Patent

Examining Procedures further articulates that the reason for any non-entry should be explained expressly in the Advisory Action.

Withdrawal of Claims 18-24

In numbered paragraphs 1 and 2 on pages 2 and 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner has withdrawn claims 18-24 as being directed toward a different invention.

It is believed that claims 18-24 are so closely related to claims 1-17 that claims 18-24 should remain in the same application. Claims 1-14 and 17 are directed to a business support system, and claims 15 and 16 are directed to a business support system connecting to one or more external processing systems. Similar to claims 15 and 16, claims 18-24 are directed to a data processing system connecting to one or more external processing systems.

Further, the Examiner stated on page 2 of the Office Action that claims 1-17 "are directed toward a protocol conversion module that is specific to processing business support data, such as service information requests including sales campaign data, and therefore can be used to perform marketing campaigns." However, independent claims 1, 8, 15, and 16 do not recite such language. The Examiner also stated that claims 18-24 are "directed toward a data processing system, but they do not **require** the details of a protocol conversion module that is specific to processing business support data, such as service information requests including sales campaign data" (emphasis added). It is noted that claim 1, for example, specifies "data form conversion means" and that independent claim 18 similarly recites "a data item request protocol converting part."

In addition, independent claims 15 and 18 are very similar. For example, claim 15 recites "request receiving means," "data requesting means," "access routine activating means," "data item request protocol converting means," and "information sending means," while claim 18 recites "a request receiving part," "a data requesting part," "an access routine activating part," "a data item request protocol converting part," and "an information sending part."

It is believed, moreover, that evaluation of both sets of claims would not provide an undue burden upon the Examiner at this time in comparison with the additional expense and

delay to Applicants in having to protect the additional subject matter recited by claims 18-24 by filing a divisional application.

MPEP § 803 sets forth the criteria for restriction between patentably distinct inventions. The first criterion (A) indicates that the inventions must be independent (see MPEP § 802.01, § 806.04, § 808.01) or distinct as claimed (see MPEP § 806.05-806.05(i)); and the second criterion (B) indicates that there must be a serious burden on the Examiner if restriction is required (see MPEP § 803.02, § 806.04(a)-§ 806.04(i), § 808.01(a), and § 808.02). The Examiner has not set forth why there would be a serious burden if restriction is required.

Thus, it is respectfully requested that claims 18-24 remain in the subject application.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

In numbered paragraphs 4 and 5 on pages 3-8 of the current Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-17 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Filepp et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,758,072). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections for the reasons presented below.

Claim 1 recites, as amended, "a plurality of service request production means corresponding to the plurality of external processing systems, respectively, each of the service request production means producing service information request data, in a predetermined form for a corresponding one of the plurality of external processing systems ...; a plurality of data form conversion means corresponding to the plurality of external processing systems, respectively, each of the data form conversion means converting the form of the service information request data produced by a corresponding one of the service request production means into a form that can be processed by a corresponding one of the external processing systems and also for converting service information provided from the corresponding one of the external processing systems in response to the service information request data into the predetermined form."

The Filepp reference relates to a distributed processing, interactive computer network that provides large numbers of simultaneous users access to large numbers of applications that feature interactive text/graphic sessions (Filepp at abstract). Referring to FIG. 2, Filepp

discloses that an exchange of messages between a network 10 and external parties occurs between two applications, that is, a message received from a user is provided to an external party such as a supplier of information to the network 10 (e.g., Dow Jones). See Filepp at col. 34, line 65 to col. 35, line 6.

The layer 200 of Filepp, including the gateway system 210 in the delivery system 20, maintains the network databases and other information necessary to support the network 10 (Filepp at col. 4, lines 39-40). Accordingly, the network 10 of Filepp provides information on a wide variety of topics, such as news, industry, financial needs, hobbies, and cultural interests (Filepp at col. 6, lines 36-38) by the layer 200, for any user. In contrast, the business support system of the present invention maintains the latest information (i.e., a user's personal information) that is supplied from one of the external processing systems.

The business support system of the present invention obtains requested information to provide to a user that has a different protocol from that used by the user's terminal and then sends the information to the user using the same protocol as that used by the user's terminal. It is the position of the applicants that the delivery system 20 of Filepp does not maintain a user's personal information, determine the information that is the latest information, or access one of the external systems.

Thus, it is submitted that claim 1 patentably distinguishes over the prior art.

Independent claim 8 recites language similar to that of claim 1.

Also similar to claim 1, independent claims 15-17 recite features not taught or suggested by the cited reference, as shown below.

Claim 15 recites, as amended, "a plurality of access routine activating means corresponding to the one or more external processing systems, respectively, each one of the access routine activating means referring to item definitions relating the plurality of data items to corresponding data access routines, each data access routine issuing a data item request to obtain the contents of the one of the data items from the corresponding external processing system storing the contents, and for activating the data access routine corresponding to the one of the data items of the user information requested by the data requesting means; a plurality of data item request protocol converting means corresponding to the one or more external processing systems, respectively, each of the data item request protocol converting means

converting the data item request, issued by the data access routine activated by the corresponding access routine activating means, into a protocol used for data exchange between the corresponding external processing system receiving the data item request and the terminal apparatus of the user, and for sending the data item request to the corresponding external processing system.”

Claim 16 recites, as amended, “a plurality of access routine activating means corresponding to the one or more external processing systems, respectively, each one of the access routine activating means referring to item definitions relating the plurality of data items to corresponding data access routines, each data access routine issuing a data item request to obtain the contents of the one of the data items from the corresponding external processing system storing the contents, and for activating the data access routine corresponding to the one of the data items of the user information requested by the data requesting means; a plurality of data item request protocol converting means corresponding to the one or more external processing systems, respectively, each of the data item request protocol converting means converting the data item request, issued by the data access routine activated by the corresponding access routine activating means, into a protocol used for data exchange between the corresponding external processing system receiving the data item request and the terminal apparatus of the user, and for sending the data item request to the corresponding external processing system.”

Claim 17 recites, as amended, “a plurality of service request production means corresponding to the plurality of external processing systems, respectively, each of the service request production means for producing service information request data in a predetermined form for a corresponding one of the external processing systems in response to a request of a user from a terminal apparatus used by the user, the terminal apparatus being one of a plurality of different communication means; a plurality of data form conversion means corresponding to the plurality of external processing systems, respectively, each of the data form conversion means converting the form of the service information request data produced by a corresponding one of the service request production means into a form that can be processed by a corresponding one of the external processing systems and also for converting service information provided from the corresponding one of the external processing systems in response to the service information request data into the predetermined form.”

The dependent claims 2-7 and 9-14 depend from the above-discussed independent claims 1 and 8 and are patentable over the prior art for at least the reasons discussed above.

Therefore, Applicants submit that claims 1-17 patentably distinguish over the prior art. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under § 103.

Conclusion

In accordance with the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that all outstanding rejections have been overcome and/or rendered moot, and further, that all pending claims patentably distinguish over the prior art. Thus, there being no further outstanding rejections, the application is submitted to be in condition for allowance, which action is earnestly solicited.

If there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

Finally, if there are any additional fees associated with filing of this response, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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